

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00262 251025Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SY-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /100 W

-----251215 041011 /20

R 250820Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO EHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5257

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USUN NEW YORK 1205

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0262

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: PINT,SF

SUB: MINISTER OF JUSTICE DISCUSSES DEATHS OF DETAINEES

REF: PRETORIA 306

1. SUMMARY. IN FEBRUARY 24 PRESS CONFERENCE ON TOPIC OF DETAINEE DEATHS, MINISTER OF JUSTICE KRUGER DEFENDED AND PRAISED SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE FORCE. HE STATED THAT MEASURES ARE BEING CONSIDERED TO PREVENT PRISON SUICIDES BUT NOTED THAT THOSE ARE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID COMPLETELY. KRUGER PROVIDED LIST AND DETAILS OF ELEVEN PERSONS HELD UNDER SECURITY LEGISLATION WHO HAVE DIED IN DETENTION SINCE MARCH 1976. JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO PRISON DEATHS WAS CALLED UNNECESSARY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN WAKE OF MOUNTING PUBLIC CONCERN OVER LARGE NUMBER OF DEATHS IN DETENTION, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, POLICE, AND PRISONS JIMMY KRUGER HELD 90- MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 23 SPECIFICALLY TO DISCUSS PRISONER DEATHS.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CAPE T 00262 251025Z

KRUGER TOOK HARD LINE, DEFENDING AND PRAISING THE SECURITY (SP) POLICE AS A "VERY GOOD" BRANCH OF THE POLICE FORCE AND SAYING "I AM ALTOGETHER SATISFIED THAT THE SECURITY POLICE UNDERSTAND....THAT WE WON'T STAND FOR PHYSICAL COERCION." IT IS UNFAIR TO SUGGEST THAT THE SP USE UNDUE FORCE, KRUGER SAID, SINCE NOT A SINGLE COURT CASE ON DEATHS OF POLITICAL

PRISONERS HAS GONE AGAINST AP. KRUGER ALSO REPEATED HIS EARLIER CHARGE THAT AT LEAST SOME OF DEATHS ARE SUICIDES OF COMMUNISTS FOLLOWING PARI INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMIT CUIKIDE RATHER THAN BETRAY THEIR CAUSE.

3. KRUGER SPOKE AT LENGTH OF MEJODF BEING USED OR

CONSIDERED TO PREVENT PRISONER "SUICIDES", WHICH IS AT PRESENT PRIMARY AREA OF CONCEPT, SAYING THAT SEVERAL MEANS BEING CONSIDERED INCLUDING PLACING BARS ON WINDOWS OF INTERROGATION ROOMS AND/OR MOVING INTERROGATION ROOMS TO GROUND FLOORS TO PREVENT PRISONERS JUMPING FROM WINDOWS (LATELY A COMMON CAUSE OF PRISONER DEATH,) PLACING PRISONERS IN LEO IRONS, AND DEPRIVING PRISONERS OF ALL CFOTHING TO PREVENT THEM FROM HANGING SELVES. NAOR PROBLEM WITH LATTER TWO COURSES, MINISTER STATED, WAS THAT PRESS LIKEL TO OBJECT; HOWEVER IN ABSENCE OF SUCH MEASURES IT WOULD BE NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT SUICIDES. PRESS WAS CRITICIZED FOR "NAIVETY BORDERING ON THE RIDICULOUS;; FOR SUGGESTING OTHERWISE.

4. CONTRART TO PRESS REPORTS, WHICH HAVE LISTED SIXTEE SPERSONS HELD FOR POLITICAL REASONS WHO HAVE DIED SINCE MARCH 1976, KRUGER PROVIDED LIST OF ELEVEN PERSONS HELD FOR SECURITY REASONS AND FIVE PERSONS HELD ON CRIMINAL CHARGES WHO DIED IN DETENTION DURING THAR TIME PERIOD (LISTS BEING POUCHED). LATER IN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CAPE T 00262 251025Z

AFTERNOON, REPLYING IN PARLIAMENT TO QUESTION POSED NY HELEN SUZMAN, KRUGER STATED THAT IN ADDITION TO SECURITY DETAINEES, TOTAL OF 117 OTHER PERSONS DIED IN JAIL IN 1976.HN THREE OF THESE CASES, MEMBERS OF POLICE FORCE WERE CONVICTED OF ASSAULT AND MANSLAUGHTER.

5. KRUGER REFUSED PRESS CALLS FOR FULL SCALE JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO DETAINEE DEATHS ON GROUNDS THAT SUCH INVESTIGATION NOT NECESSARY, SINCE EACH CASE ALREADY INVESTIGATED BY A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER" WHOSE INTEGRITY IS ABOVE QUESTION" AND BY A "PROPER INQUEST."

BOWDLER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, PRISONERS WELFARE, DEATHS, POLICE FORCES, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00262
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770065-1068
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770210/aaaaaiwc.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 84461fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PRETORIA 306
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3231991
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF JUSTICE DISCUSSES DEATHS OF DETAINEES
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/84461fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009